

EDWARD J. MARKEY  
7TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER  
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TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND  
THE INTERNET

SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2107**

2108 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2107  
(202) 225-2836

DISTRICT OFFICES:

5 HIGH STREET, SUITE 101  
MEDFORD, MA 02155  
(781) 396-2900

188 CONCORD STREET, SUITE 102  
FRAMINGHAM, MA 01702  
(508) 875-2900  
[www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey)

March 20, 2003

The Honorable Richard Pombo, Chairman  
Committee on Resources  
1324 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo: *Richard -*

I am writing to express my appreciation for the scheduling of a hearing on H. R. 770, the Morris K. Udall Arctic Wilderness Act.

I am curious, however, about whether you have made an attempt to accommodate the question of timing that I raised with you last week. As I mentioned during the hearing on H. R. 39, Arctic Coastal Plain Domestic Energy Security Act, I believe that a hearing on H. R. 770, either in Kaktovik, Alaska or Washington, DC, would serve no purpose after a markup of H. R. 39. I wonder, therefore, whether I can have your assurance that no markup of legislation to compromise the environmental values of the Arctic Refuge (by which I mean HR 39 or anything similar) will occur until after the hearing on HR 770.

Moreover, I am concerned that your decision to schedule the hearing in early April in Kaktovik may not be appropriate in light of the onset of war in Iraq. In order to travel to Kaktovik for a weekend field hearing, I am told that a military plane, military equipment and military personnel would be required. As important as it is to accord wilderness status to the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, I do not feel it would be appropriate to ask the military to divert its attention from the war to make it possible to take testimony on an issue which has already been decided by the committee.

I look forward to working with you to assure a full policy debate on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,



Ed Markey  
Member of Congress